

The Retina Group of Washington Discovers a Strategic Relationship Resulting in Increased Productivity by Using Modernizing Medicine's EHR System, EMA™ for Ophthalmology



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- Michael B. Rivers, MD

Key Benefits:

- Ophthalmology-specific electronic health records (EHR) system
- Thorough training enables a smooth transition with minimal downtime
- Relationship and technology continuously evolve
- Ease of use increases productivity

Background

The Retina Group of Washington is a national leader in retinal and macular care consisting of 14 locations throughout the Washington, DC metropolitan area. With 26 physicians and a technical staff of around 100, the leadership team spent years of due diligence to ensure they selected the right EHR system for their practice.

Dr. Michael Rivers, practicing retina specialist and EHR system project lead, explains, “We had been using a hybrid solution that consisted of a database backbone but the actual documentation was completed on paper. This approach required us to scan in the patient chart, which resulted in data that was not searchable, therefore not useful. We used this method for six years with the intent that it would be temporary while we searched for

a more advantageous and efficient solution. In 2012, we began researching various EHR systems which involved visiting vendor’s corporate headquarters along with actual practices to observe the software being used.”

“With a company of our large size, we only considered systems with three key components. First, we needed a vendor that produced software that was easy to learn and to train, not only during the implementation transition but also continuously. The second requirement was that the system needed to be cloud-based. Given that we have 14 offices, the infrastructure to maintain a server-based platform became so expensive and unwieldy that a cloud-based system would really simplify our internal IT efforts. Finally, the third major factor was that we always viewed the vendor relationship as strategic and the project organic to grow and flow as we do.”

“After investigating numerous systems, we felt very strongly that Modernizing Medicine’s EHR system, EMA, would meet all of our requirements and is a company that shares our vision. After meeting with their leadership team, it was apparent that they understood this would be an evolving project and relationship over the years to come.”

Well-Trained Staff Equals Implementation Success

“The effort from the Modernizing Medicine team coupled with the commitment from our staff resulted in an extremely smooth transition. Members from their implementation team visited our office and observed us seeing patients in clinic. After that evaluation, they provided helpful recommendations on how we could incorporate EMA into our existing workflow and also areas to focus on during training, which we chose to hold across three separate weekends,” shared Dr. Rivers.

“After we went live with EMA at the start of 2016, we initially decreased our patient volume to accommodate the learning curve. However, we were back up to full speed in just two weeks. The Modernizing Medicine team was extremely helpful in aiding us to achieve minimal downtime to our productivity. Training was a really critical aspect which proves to be an ongoing success.”

Ophthalmology-Specific

EMA was designed by ophthalmologists and is equipped with a complete medical database. The adaptive learning component of the software intuitively learns Dr. Rivers’ preferences and common diagnoses with minimal navigation required.

“As a retina specialist, the built-in medical knowledge has been extremely beneficial. The day we went live, my first patient with EMA was a new patient who had suffered from trauma to the eye and wanted to discuss a rare disease. EMA made even a complicated diagnosis something I could document very easily due to the wealth of ophthalmology-specific material that is presented. I also appreciate the level of customization EMA offers unlike template-based systems,” Dr. Rivers said.

“Another important feature is the automated coding that EMA generates. We have trained our physicians to look at the coding level the system recommends and that has been really helpful. EMA very elegantly provides the doctor feedback so we are much more aware of our responsibilities in documenting certain requirements in order to be paid appropriately and withstand an audit.”

More Time to Spend with Patients

EMA’s native, cloud-based iPad application allows Dr. Rivers to document effortlessly by simply tapping his way through an exam, eliminating additional paperwork at the end of the day. EMA can also be used as a tool to help achieve financial success under Merit-based Incentive Payment Systems (MIPS) which would allow Dr. Rivers to focus on what he does best, providing quality care for his patients.

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“Once I enter the exam room, the patient has my undivided attention, which gives them the satisfaction they are looking for. I like to use the drawing tool on the iPad because it gives me the ability to stay directly engaged with the patient while giving them a visualization of our discussion. Also, my scribe and I both have iPads so we can simultaneously document in real-time, eliminating the need to turn my back. EMA has been a lovely tool to enable us as physicians to do what we do best; be present for the patient. I look forward to a successful future with EMA and Modernizing Medicine.”

